Zero duty import of raw and white sugar

3091. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government allowed zero duty import of raw sugar and white sugar to cope up with domestic demands during 2009-10 at fair prices;

(b) whether international raw sugar prices has shot up ever since India announced the zero duty import, from around US $ 280 per tonne to $ 380 per tonne; and

(c) if so, whether this would lead to higher sugar prices in domestic market than stabilized fair prices envisaged earlier?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir. In order to augment domestic availability of sugar, the Central Government has permitted duty free import of white/refined sugar upto 1 million ton under OGL by the designated agencies upto 01.08.2009 *vide* notification dated 17.04.2009. Further, the Government has also permitted sugar factories to import raw sugar under Advance Authorization Scheme upto 30.09.2009 and under Open General License (OGL) upto 01.08.2009 and sell the processed raw sugar within India so as to cope up with the domestic demand in the current sugar season and during 2009-10 sugar season.

(b) International prices of raw sugar have increased due to global deficit in sugar including decline in sugar production in India. The futures price of raw sugar were quoted on 30th January, 2009 for the month of March, 2009 was 12.67 c/lb (approx. US $ 280 per ton). It is being quoted at 18.43 c/lb (approx. US $406 per ton) on 27th July, 2009 for the month of October, 2009.

(c) The domestic price of a commodity including sugar in the open market depends upon a number of factors *viz.* supply, demand, international prices and market sentiments etc. As such, it is not possible to indicate the impact of import of sugar on prevailing price situation in domestic market.

Growing population and economic implications

3092. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the population of the country is growing exponentially;

(b) whether this will have a debilitating effect on the economic development of the country;

(c) whether it is also a fact that some of the States are lagging behind in achieving the population stabilization target; and